

Books on Iraq

Ahmed, N. M. (2003). *Behind the war on terror: Western secret strategy and the struggle for Iraq*. Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers.

Following the U.S. declaration of a "war on terror," Washington hawks were quick to label Iraq part of an "axis of evil." After a tense build-up, in March 2003 the United States and Britain invaded Iraq, purportedly to protect Western publics from weapons of mass destruction (WMD). But was this the real reason, or simply a convenient pretext to veil a covert agenda? Using official sources, Ahmed investigates U.S. and British claims about Iraq's WMD programs and in the process reveals the hidden motives behind the 2003 invasion and the grand strategy of which it is a part. He shows that the true goals of U.S.-British policy in the Middle East are camouflaged by spin, P.R. declarations and seemingly noble words. The reality can only be comprehended through knowledge of the history of Western intervention in the region. Ahmed demonstrates that such intervention has been dictated ruthlessly by economic and political interests, with little regard for human rights. He traces events of the past decades, beginning with the West's support for the highly repressive Shah of Iran, his subsequent usurpation by the Ayatollah's Islamist regime and the West's resultant backing of Saddam Hussein. The sponsorship of Saddam's tyranny—a self-serving tactic intended to strategically counterbalance Iran—included the supply of technology to build WMD, as well as tacit complicity in their use against Iranians and Kurds. Ahmed's meticulous research into the secret history of Western maneuverings in the Middle East since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire reveals the actual causes of the first Gulf War, the humanitarian catastrophe created by the 12-year sanctions policy against Iraq, and the consistent obstructions of the Oil for Food program. He also provides information on the West's own widespread use of WMD, and the likely culprits of the 2001 anthrax attacks in the U.S.

Al-Ali, Z. (2014). *The struggle for Iraq's future: How corruption, incompetence and sectarianism have undermined democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Many Westerners have offered interpretations of Iraq's nation-building progress in the wake of the 2003 war and the eventual withdrawal of American troops from the country, but little has been written by Iraqis themselves. This forthright book fills in the gap. Zaid Al-Ali, an Iraqi lawyer with direct ties to the people of his homeland, to government circles, and to the international community, provides a uniquely insightful and up-to-date view of Iraq's people, their government, and the extent of their nation's worsening problems. The true picture is discouraging: murderous bombings, ever-increasing sectarianism, and pervasive government corruption have combined to prevent progress on such crucial issues as security, healthcare, and power availability. Al-Ali contends that the ill-planned U.S. intervention destroyed the Iraqi state, creating a

black hole which corrupt and incompetent members of the elite have made their own. And yet, despite all efforts to divide them, Iraqis retain a strong sense of national identity, Al-Ali maintains. He reevaluates Iraq's relationship with itself, discusses the inspiration provided by the events of the Arab Spring, and redefines Iraq's most important struggle to regain its viability as a nation.

Bennis, P. & Moushabeck, M. (1991). *Beyond the storm: A Gulf crisis reader.*

Northhampton: Olive Branch Press.

The editors of this collection of 30 essays have assembled a distinguished cast of dissenting voices, from American democratic socialists like Barbara Ehrenreich to former Arab League ambassador to the U.N. Clovis Maksoud. Said's foreword, which is forthright and even-handed, notes that ignorance runs deep on both sides (the U.S. and the Arab world), and that nowhere in the Gulf region is there serious academic study of the U.S. Several other essays stand out. Bennis (From Stones to Statehood: The Palestinian Uprising) argues convincingly that the U.N. essentially served as a rubber stamp for U.S. policy. Israeli activist Stanley Cohen offers a particularly insightful and compassionate evaluation of the reaction of the Israeli peace movement to the war. Even more useful is Laura Flanders's thoughtful dissection of the role of the media, with a telling description of the abdication of responsibility by television journalists who allowed themselves to become cheerleaders for administration policy. A comprehensive chronology is included, as is the text of salient U.N. resolutions.

Black, E. (2008). *Banking on Baghdad: Inside Iraq's 7,000-year history of war, profit, and conflict.* New York: Dialog Press.

In emphasizing the symbiosis of oil profits and Western imperialism in the making of modern Iraq, Black (IBM and the Holocaust) and a team of 30 researchers (whom he credits) have unearthed a wealth of historical detail, but not a satisfying framework for it. Temporal balance is also missing: the book's first 6,500 years pass in a 42-page montage of conquest and massacre, with the narrative slowing to a snail's pace during the late Ottoman and British Mandate periods to explore the interminable wranglings among Western oil companies, European governments and entrepreneur C.S. Gulbenkian over Iraqi oil concessions in the first half of the 20th century. Accounts of the Sunni-Shiite schism and the modern recrudescence of Iraqi anti-Semitism are thrown into the mix, but one gets little sense of how all these elements determine the social, economic and political turmoil of contemporary Iraq, especially since the crucial Saddam era flits by in just six disjointed pages. In the end, Black does little more with a lot of undeniably fascinating material than to invoke the "unstoppable repetition" of despotic government and violent exploitation, but his corporate-historical gleanings are more than enough to carry the book.

Bilmes, L. J. & Stiglitz, J. E. (2008). *The three trillion dollar war: The true cost of the Iraq conflict*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.

The true cost of the Iraq War is \$3 trillion—and counting—rather than the \$50 billion projected by the White House. Apart from its tragic human toll, the Iraq War will be staggeringly expensive in financial terms. This sobering study by Nobel Prize winner Joseph E. Stiglitz and Harvard professor Linda J. Bilmes casts a spotlight on expense items that have been hidden from the U.S. taxpayer, including not only big-ticket items like replacing military equipment (being used up at six times the peacetime rate) but also the cost of caring for thousands of wounded veterans—for the rest of their lives. Shifting to a global focus, the authors investigate the cost in lives and economic damage within Iraq and the region. Finally, with the chilling precision of an actuary, the authors measure what the U.S. taxpayer's money would have produced if instead it had been invested in the further growth of the U.S. economy. Written in language as simple as the details are disturbing, this book will forever change the way we think about the war.

Bolger, D. (2014). *Why we lost: A general's inside account of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

A high-ranking general's gripping insider account of the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and how it all went wrong. Over a thirty-five-year career, Daniel Bolger rose through the army infantry to become a three-star general, commanding in both theaters of the U.S. campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. He participated in meetings with top-level military and civilian players, where strategy was made and managed. At the same time, he regularly carried a rifle alongside rank-and-file soldiers in combat actions, unusual for a general. Now, as a witness to all levels of military command, Bolger offers a unique assessment of these wars, from 9/11 to the final withdrawal from the region. Writing with hard-won experience and unflinching honesty, Bolger makes the firm case that in Iraq and in Afghanistan, we lost — but we didn't have to. Intelligence was garbled. Key decision makers were blinded by spreadsheets or theories. And, at the root of our failure, we never really understood our enemy. Why We Lost is a timely, forceful, and compulsively readable account of these wars from a fresh and authoritative perspective.

Bremer III, L. P. & McConnell, M. (2006). *My year in Iraq: The struggle to build a future of hope*. New York: Threshold Editions.

As the American diplomat chosen by President Bush to direct the reconstruction of post-Saddam Iraq, L. Paul Bremer arrived in Baghdad in May of 2003. For fourteen danger-filled months, he worked tirelessly to realize the vision he and President Bush share of a free and democratic New Iraq. MY YEAR IN IRAQ: The Struggle to Build a Future of Hope is a candid and vital account of this world-shaping task and the daunting

challenges lying in wait. With his unique insider perspective, Bremer takes us from the ancient lanes in the holy city of Najaf to the fires of a looted and lawless Baghdad; from the White House Situation Room to the Pentagon E-Ring; from making the case for more U.S. troops to helping Iraq's new leaders write a liberal constitution to unify a traumatized and divided Iraqi people.

Buchheit, P. (editor). (2008). *American wars: Illusions and realities*. Atlanta:

Clarity Press.

When Americans hear that the US country may go to war against another nation, we generally believe there's probably a good reason for it or that no viable alternatives exist--or we don't think about it at all. We trust our leaders to represent us and defend our values. We accept their claims that war is to ensure our safety when others who wish to harm us. The media reassures us that our reasons for war are altruistic -- but is all this really true?, that we wish to spread democracy and allow others to adopt our way of life. But is this the case? This book examines the realities of American wars how American values are manipulated to gain support for initiatives contrary to our ideals and well-being of our country Are we fighting for the right reasons? Can we trust the government, military, and media to deal honestly with the American people? Do we know the full costs of war to ourselves and to others? Are there undue benefits or inequitable losses to anyone involved? What is the human face of the enemy? Is the world a better place because of our wars? can we as world citizens resolve our differences in a better way? This book seeks to provide insight into basic American misconceptions about war

Chandrasekaran, R. (2007). *Imperial life in the emerald city: Inside Iraq's*

Green Zone. New York: Vintage Books.

The Green Zone, Baghdad, 2003: in this walled-off compound of swimming pools and luxurious amenities, Paul Bremer and his Coalition Provisional Authority set out to fashion a new, democratic Iraq. Staffed by idealistic aides chosen primarily for their views on issues such as abortion and capital punishment, the CPA spent the crucial first year of occupation pursuing goals that had little to do with the immediate needs of a postwar nation: flat taxes instead of electricity and deregulated health care instead of emergency medical supplies. In this acclaimed firsthand account, the former Baghdad bureau chief of The Washington Post gives us an intimate portrait of life inside this Oz-like bubble, which continued unaffected by the growing mayhem outside. This is a quietly devastating tale of imperial folly, and the definitive history of those early days when things went irrevocably wrong in Iraq.

Cockburn, P. (2007). *The occupation: War and resistance in Iraq*. New York: Verso.

*In February 2003, Patrick Cockburn secretly crossed the Tigris river from Syria into Iraq just before the US/British invasion, and has covered the war ever since. In *The Occupation*, he provides a vivid and disturbing picture of a country in turmoil, and the dangers and privations endured by its people. *The Occupation* explores the mosaic of communities in Iraq, the US and Britain's failure to understand the country they were invading and how this led to fatal mistakes. Cockburn, who has been visiting Iraq since 1978, describes the disintegration of the country under the occupation. Travelling throughout Iraq, from the Kurdish north, to Baghdad, Falluja and Basra, he records the response of the country's population – Shia and Sunni, Arab and Kurd – to the invasion, the growth of the resistance and its transformation into a full-scale uprising. He explains why deepening religious and ethnic divisions drove the country towards civil war. Above all, Cockburn traces how the occupation's failure led to the collapse of the country, and the high price paid by Iraqis. He charts the impact of savage sectarian killings, rampant corruption and economic chaos on everyday life: from the near destruction of Baghdad's al-Mutanabi book market to the failure to supply electricity, water and, ironically, fuel to Iraq's population. *The Occupation* is a compelling portrait of a ravaged country, and the appalling consequences of imperial arrogance.*

Davies, N. J. S. & Ferencz, B. (2010). *Blood on our hands: The American invasion and destruction of Iraq*. New York: Nimble Books.

The invasion and occupation of Iraq wasn't just a tragic mistake. It was a crime. From the planning of aggression in 2002 through years of hostile military occupation, the United States systematically violated the United Nations Charter, the Geneva Conventions and virtually every principle of international law and order. America's crimes against the people of Iraq were shielded from public scrutiny by what senior U.S. military officers called the "quiet, disguised, media-free approach" developed in Central America in the 1980s. The echo chamber of the Western corporate media fleshed out the Pentagon's propaganda to create a virtual Iraq in the minds of the public, feeding a political discourse that bore no relation to the real war it was waging, the country it was destroying or the lives of its inhabitants. In an easily readable and flowing narrative, Nicolas Davies has carefully taken apart the wall of propaganda surrounding one of history's most significant military disasters and most serious international crimes: non-existent WMDs; the equally fictitious "centuries-old sectarian blood feud" in Iraq; and the secrecy of the dirty war waged by American-led death squads. Unlike other writers, Davies has firmly placed each aspect of the war within a coherent context of illegal aggression, hostile military occupation and popular resistance, to uncover the brutal reality of a war that has probably killed at least a million people.

Everest, L. (2004). *Oil, power and empire: Iraq and the U.S. global agenda.*

Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.

Is the U.S. poised to topple Saddam -because of his taste for biological and other weapons of mass destruction? Is it George Jr.'s revenge for his father? This tightly written book reveals the agenda behind the U.S. moves and why now. Including an overview of history, this book is timeless and timely. Larry Everest is a correspondent for the Revolutionary Worker newspaper and author of Behind the Poison Cloud: Union Carbide's Bhopal Massacre. He has reported from the Iran, the West Bank, Gaza, India, and Iraq, and his articles have appeared in publications across the U.S. In 1991 he traveled to Iraq and shot the video "Iraq: War Against the People." He currently lives in Berkeley, California.

Filkins, D. (2009). *The forever war.* New York: Vintage Books.

Filkins, a New York Times prize-winning reporter, is widely regarded as among the finest war correspondents of this generation. His richly textured book is based on his work in Afghanistan and Iraq since 1998. It begins with a Taliban-staged execution in Kabul. It ends with Filkins musing on the names in a WWI British cemetery in Baghdad. In between, the work is a vivid kaleidoscope of vignettes. Individually, the strength of each story is its immediacy; together they portray a theater of the absurd, in which Filkins, an extraordinarily brave man, moves as both participant and observer. Filkins does not editorialize—a welcome change from the punditry that shapes most writing from these war zones. This book also differs essentially from traditional war correspondence because of its universal empathy, feelings enhanced by Filkins's spare prose. Saudi women in Kabul airport, clad in burqas and stylish shoes, bemoan their husbands' devotion to jihad. An Iraqi casually says to his friend, Let's go kill some Americans. A marine is shot dead escorting Filkins on a photo opportunity. Iraqi soldiers are disconcerted when he appears in running shorts (They looked at [my legs] in horror, as if I were naked). Carl von Clausewitz said war is a chameleon. In vividly illustrating the varied ways people in Afghanistan and Iraq have been affected by ongoing war, Filkins demonstrates that truth in prose.

Galbraith, P. W. (2006). *The end of Iraq: How American incompetence created a war without end.* New York: Simon & Shuster.

The End of Iraq, definitive, tough-minded, clear-eyed, describes America's failed strategy toward that country and what must be done now. The United States invaded Iraq with grand ambitions to bring it democracy and thereby transform the Middle East. Instead, Iraq has disintegrated into three constituent components: a pro-western Kurdistan in the north, an Iran-dominated Shiite entity in the south, and a chaotic Sunni Arab region in the center. The country is plagued by insurgency and is in the opening phases of a potentially catastrophic civil war. George W. Bush broke up Iraq when he ordered its invasion in 2003. The United States not only removed Saddam Hussein, it

also smashed and later dissolved the institutions by which Iraq's Sunni Arab minority ruled the country: its army, its security services, and the Baath Party. With these institutions gone and irreplaceable, the basis of an Iraqi state has disappeared. *The End of Iraq* describes the administration's strategic miscalculations behind the war as well as the blunders of the American occupation. There was the failure to understand the intensity of the ethnic and religious divisions in Iraq. This was followed by incoherent and inconsistent strategies for governing, the failure to spend money for reconstruction, the misguided effort to create a national army and police, and then the turning over of the country's management to Republican political loyalists rather than qualified professionals. As a matter of morality, Galbraith writes, the Kurds of Iraq are no less entitled to independence than are Lithuanians, Croatians, or Palestinians. And if the country's majority Shiites want to run their own affairs, or even have their own state, on what democratic principle should they be denied? If the price of a unified Iraq is another dictatorship, Galbraith writes in *The End of Iraq*, it is too high a price to pay. The United States must focus now, not on preserving or forging a unified Iraq, but on avoiding a spreading and increasingly dangerous and deadly civil war. It must accept the reality of Iraq's breakup and work with Iraq's Shiites, Kurds, and Sunni Arabs to strengthen the already semi-independent regions. If they are properly constituted, these regions can provide security, though not all will be democratic. There is no easy exit from Iraq for America. We have to relinquish our present strategy -- trying to build national institutions when there is in fact no nation. That effort is doomed, Galbraith argues, and it will only leave the United States with an open-ended commitment in circumstances of uncontrollable turmoil. Peter Galbraith has been in Iraq many times over the last twenty-one years during historic turning points for the country: the Iran-Iraq War, the Kurdish genocide, the 1991 uprising, the immediate aftermath of the 2003 war, and the writing of Iraq's constitutions. In *The End of Iraq*, he offers many firsthand observations of the men who are now Iraq's leaders. He draws on his nearly two decades of involvement in Iraq policy working for the U.S. government to appraise what has occurred and what will happen. *The End of Iraq* is the definitive account of this war and its ramifications.

Gardner, L. C. & Young, M. B. (2008). *Iraq and the lessons of Vietnam: Or, how not to learn from the past*. New York: the New Press.

With countless lives lost and the situation in Iraq more desperate than ever, it is clear that U.S. foreign policy makers have learned little from the past, even as they have been obsessed with the "Vietnam syndrome." Iraq and the Lessons of Vietnam explores this conundrum. In Iraq and the Lessons of Vietnam, Lloyd C. Gardner, author of several celebrated books about U.S. foreign policy and Vietnam, and Marilyn B. Young, author of the leading history of the Vietnam War, have brought together the most renowned historians of Vietnam—and leading analysts of contemporary U.S. foreign policy—to consider the correspondences between then and now. By closely examining how our policy makers have failed to understand the history of our wars, relations with allies and antagonists, military strategies and capabilities, and the nature and limitations of presidential and American power, these writers demonstrate that Rumsfeld had it right when he noted that "the biggest problem we've got in the country is people who

don't study history anymore." As Howard Zinn notes, "Iraq is not Vietnam, the makers of war tell us, hoping we will forget. The writers in this volume insist that we remember, and, in these thoughtful, sobering essays, they explain why. It is history at its best—meaning, at its most useful." With contributions by: Christian G. Appy • Andrew J. Bacevich • Alex Danchev • David Elliott • Elizabeth L. Hillman • Gabriel Kolko • Walter LaFeber • Wilfried Mausbach • Alfred W. McCoy • Gareth Porter • John Prados

Gordon, M. R. & Trainor, B. E. (2013). *The endgame: The inside story of the struggle for Iraq, from George W. Bush to Barack Obama*. New York:

Vintage Books.

In this follow-up to their national bestseller Cobra II, Michael Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor deftly piece together the story of the most widely reported but least understood war in American history. This stunning account of the political and military struggle between American, Iraqi, and Iranian forces brings together vivid reporting of diplomatic intrigue and gripping accounts of the blow-by-blow fighting that lasted nearly a decade. Informed by brilliant research, classified documents, and extensive interviews with key figures—including everyone from the intelligence community to Sunni and Shi'ite leaders and former insurgents to senior Iraqi military officers—The Endgame presents a riveting chronicle of the occupation of Iraq to the withdrawal of American troops that is sure to remain the essential account of the war for years to come.

Gregg, H. S., Rothstein, H. S., & Arquilla, J., (Editors). (2010). *The three circles of war: Understanding the dynamics of conflict in Iraq*.

Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books.

The conflict in Iraq is characterized by three faces of war: interstate conflict, civil war, and insurgency. The Coalition's invasion of Iraq in March 2003 began as an interstate war. No sooner had Saddam Hussein been successfully deposed, however, than U.S.-led forces faced a lethal insurgency. After Sunni al Qaeda in Iraq bombed the Shia al-Askari Shrine in 2006, the burgeoning conflict took on the additional element of civil war with sectarian violence between the Sunni and the Shia. The most effective strategies in a war as complicated as the three-level conflict in Iraq are intertwined and complementary, according to the editors of this volume. For example, the "surge" in U.S. troops in 2007 went beyond an increase in manpower; the mission had changed, giving priority to public security. This new direction also simultaneously addressed the insurgency as well as the civil war by forging new, trusting relationships between Americans and Iraqis and between Sunni and Shia. This book has broad implications for future decisions about war and peace in the twenty-first century.

Isikoff, M. & Corn, D. (2007). *Hubris: The inside story of spin, scandal, and the selling of the Iraq War*. New York: Broadway Books.

Filled with news-making revelations that made it a New York Times bestseller, Hubris takes us behind the scenes at the White House, CIA, Pentagon, State Department, and Congress to show how George W. Bush came to invade Iraq - and how his administration struggled with the devastating fallout. Hubris connects the dots between Bush's expletive-laden outbursts at Saddam Hussein, the bitter battles between the CIA and the White House, the fights within the intelligence community over Saddam's supposed weapons of mass destruction, the outing of an undercover CIA officer, and the Bush administration's misleading sales campaign for war. Written by veteran reporters Michael Isikoff and David Corn, this is an inside look at how a president took the nation to war using faulty and fraudulent intelligence. It's a dramatic page-turner and an intriguing account of conspiracy, backstabbing, bureaucratic ineptitude, journalistic malfeasance, and arrogance.

Juhasz, A. (2008). *The tyranny of oil: The world's most powerful industry – and what we must do to stop it*. New York: HarperCollins.

*In this thorough, readable takedown of Big Oil, the most profitable industry in the world, Juhasz (*The Bush Agenda*) exposes the ways in which a half dozen oil companies have achieved control over American families and U.S. politics, triggering environmental and humanitarian catastrophes they have no intention of resolving. Within 10 years of Standard Oil's founding in 1870, John D. Rockefeller monopolized the refining, marketing and output of U.S. oil; ever since 1890's Sherman Antitrust Act split the company into small constituent parts, oil players have scrambled to evade regulation, regather into ever-larger corporations and regain the ability to set prices and control output. Debunking industry claims over recent oil price escalation, Juhasz exposes how Big Oil has used techniques like speculative futures markets and the "Enron Loophole"--along with massive operations opacity--to reap record profits year after year while growing their political influence; indeed, Juhasz locates the current "oilgarchy" making "the most pressing decisions of our time" from inside George W. Bush's White House, crafting policy and advocating war. Calling for a "Separation of Oil and State," this excellent, wide-ranging study of disastrous monopoly capitalism should shake up notions that major energy players are interested in any alternative to more oil, money and power.*

Juhasz, A. (2006). *The Bush agenda: Invading the world one economy at a time*. New York: HarperCollins.

*In *The Bush Agenda*, Antonia Juhasz exposes a radical corporate globalization agenda that has been refined by leading members and allies of the Bush administration over decades and reached its fullest, most aggressive implementation under George W.*

*Bush—and Bush Agenda adherents plan for it to outlast him. Juhasz uncovers the history and key role of U.S. corporations in the creation of this agenda—focusing on Bechtel, Lockheed Martin, Chevron, and Halliburton—then presents the Iraq War as its most brutal application to date. Expertly revealing the oil timeline driving the war, Juhasz charts exactly how the administration has fundamentally transformed Iraq's economy, locked in sweeping advantages to its corporate allies, and expanded its target to the whole Middle East. The results of these same corporate globalization policies—dislocation, extreme poverty, and increased violence and terrorism—have been demonstrated in regions from South America to Africa to the Middle East and Asia, and in the United States. Extensively researched and now updated with a new afterword, *The Bush Agenda* is a brilliant, informative analysis, revealing the hard truths about where the Bush administration and its corporate allies are leading the modern world—and what we can do about it.*

O'Huallachain, D. L. & Sharpe, J. F. (editors). (2007). *Neoconned! again:*

***Hypocrisy, lawlessness, and the rape of Iraq.* Norfolk, VA: Light in the Darkness Publications.**

The moral, political, and legal problems surrounding the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq are addressed with uncommon frankness in this collection of essays by some of the world's most influential academics, lawyers, journalists, politicians, and military, intelligence, and media experts. Contributions include academics such as Noam Chomsky, Immanuel Wallerstein, and Claes Ryn; journalists Milton Viorst, Robert Fisk, Kirkpatrick Sale, and Justin Raimondo; former CIA professional Ray McGovern; former Defense Intelligence Agency professional W. Patrick Lang; and Fr. Jean-Marie Benjamin, personal friend of the former Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq Tariq Aziz. Discussing the Iraq war and related issues such as the legal foundation of the war on terror, the detention practices at Guantanamo bay, and the roots of the American neoconservative ideology, the essays illustrate the hypocrisy and illegality of America's stance on terrorism and its policies of aggression in the Middle East.

Ricks, T. E. (2005). *Fiasco: The American military adventure in Iraq, 2003 to 2005.* New York: Penguin Books.

*Fiasco is a more strongly worded title than you might expect a seasoned military reporter such as Thomas E. Ricks to use, accustomed as he is to the even-handed style of daily newspaper journalism. But Ricks, the Pentagon correspondent for the Washington Post and the author of the acclaimed account of Marine Corps boot camp, *Making the Corps* (released in a 10th anniversary edition to accompany the paperback release of *Fiasco*), has written a thorough and devastating history of the war in Iraq from the planning stages through the continued insurgency in early 2006, and he does not shy away from naming those he finds responsible. His tragic story is divided in two. The first part--the runup to the war and the invasion in 2003--is familiar from books*

like Cobra II and Plan of Attack, although Ricks uses his many military sources to portray an officer class that was far more skeptical of the war beforehand than generally reported. But the heart of his book is the second half, beginning in August 2003, when, as he writes, the war really began, with the bombing of the Jordanian embassy and the emergence of the insurgency. His strongest critique is that the U.S. military failed to anticipate--and then failed to recognize--the insurgency, and tried to fight it with conventional methods that only fanned its flames. What makes his portrait particularly damning are the dozens of military sources--most of them on record--who join in his critique, and the thousands of pages of internal documents he uses to make his case for a war poorly planned and bravely but blindly fought. The paperback edition of Fiasco includes a new postscript in which Ricks looks back on the year since the book's release, a year in which the intensity and frequency of attacks on American soldiers only increased and in which Ricks's challenging account became accepted as conventional wisdom, with many of the dissident officers in his story given the reins of leadership, although Ricks still finds the prospects for the conflict grim.

Ritter, S. (2006). *Iraq confidential: The untold story of the intelligence*

conspiracy to undermine the UN and overthrow Saddam Hussein. New

York: Nation Books.

Scott Ritter is the straight-talking former marine officer who the CIA wants to silence. After the 1991 Gulf War, Ritter helped lead the UN weapons inspections of Iraq, and found himself at the center of a dangerous game between the Iraqi and United States regimes. As Ritter reveals in this explosive book, Washington was only interested in disarmament as a tool for its own agenda. Operating in a fog of espionage and counter-espionage, Ritter and his team were determined to find out the truth about Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). The CIA was equally determined to stop them. For the truth, we now know, is that Iraq was playing a deadly bluffing game, and actually had no WMD. But to have revealed this would have derailed America's drive for regime change. Iraq Confidential charts the disillusionment of a staunch patriot who came to realize that his own government sought to undermine effective arms control in the Middle East. Ritter shows us a world of deceit and betrayal, in which nothing is as it seems. A host of characters from Mossad, MI6 and the CIA pepper this powerful narrative, which contains revelations that will permanently affect the ongoing debates about Iraq.

Sifry, M. L. & Cerf, C. (Editors). *The Gulf War reader: History, documents,*

opinions. New York: Three Rivers Press.

The Gulf War Reader is a timely and indispensable guide to the underlying issues, interests, and passions that erupted in the world's first post-Cold War conflict.

Woodward, B. (2004). *Plan of attack: The definitive account of the decision to invade Iraq*. New York: Simon & Shuster.

Plan of Attack is the definitive account of how and why President George W. Bush, his war council, and allies launched a preemptive attack to topple Saddam Hussein and occupy Iraq. Bob Woodward's latest landmark account of Washington decision making provides an original, authoritative narrative of behind-the-scenes maneuvering over two years, examining the causes and consequences of the most controversial war since Vietnam. Based on interviews with 75 key participants and more than three and a half hours of exclusive interviews with President Bush, Plan of Attack is part presidential history charting the decisions made during 16 critical months; part military history revealing precise details and the evolution of the Top Secret war planning under the restricted codeword Polo Step; and part a harrowing spy story as the CIA dispatches a covert paramilitary team into northern Iraq six months before the start of the war. This team recruited 87 Iraqi spies designated with the cryptonym DB/ROCKSTARS, one of whom turned over the personnel files of all 6,000 men in Saddam Hussein's personal security organization. What emerges are astonishingly intimate portraits: President Bush in war cabinet meetings in the White House Situation Room and the Oval Office, and in private conversation; Dick Cheney, the focused and driven vice president; Colin Powell, the conflicted and cautious secretary of state; Donald Rumsfeld, the controlling war technocrat; George Tenet, the activist CIA director; Tommy Franks, the profane and demanding general; Condoleezza Rice, the ever-present referee and national security adviser; Karl Rove, the hands-on political strategist; other key members of the White House staff and congressional leadership; and foreign leaders ranging from British Prime Minister Blair to Russian President Putin. Plan of Attack provides new details on the intelligence assessments of Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction and the planning for the war's aftermath.